

Dr. Hinde. I find it to be identical with a specimen in Mr. Monteiro's collection from Angola.

201. *HYDRORNIA PORPHYRIO* "(Temm.)", Hartl., Journ. f. Orn. 1855, p. 357; *Id.*, Orn. Westafr. p. 243.

In Mr. Swanzy's collection is a specimen of this curious Gallinule, which was first discovered by Pel at Elmina.

202. *PODICA SENEGALENSIS* (Vieill.); Hartl., Orn. Westafr. p. 249.

A specimen of this bird is in Mr. Swanzy's collection. Pel also obtained it in Ashantee.

203. *PHALACROCORAX AFRICANUS* (Gm.); Hartl., Orn. Westafr. p. 260.

One specimen sent by Mr. Ussher from the Volta.

†204. *HYDROCHELIDON FISSIPES* (L.). *H. nigra*, Hartl., Orn. Westafr. p. 256.

One specimen in Mr. Swanzy's collection.

XXXVII.—*Fourth Appendix to a List of Birds observed in Malta and Gozo.* By CHARLES A. WRIGHT, C.M.Z.S.

268. *STERNA CASPIA*. (Caspian Tern.)

On the 21st of May 1869, I visited Fort-Manoel Island; as soon as I arrived I saw a large Tern flying over the bridge. It was fearless, and repeatedly approached quite close to the soldiers on guard, who threw pieces of bread to it, upon which it immediately pounced and swallowed. The men told me that it had been there for several hours, flying up and down the creek, every now and then dropping into the water after small fish which appeared on the surface. I longed to make a prize of it; for I believed it to be *Sterna caspia*, though I had never seen this beautiful species on the wing before. After waiting more than half an hour it came within range, and I shot it from my skiff, when it proved to be what I had expected. It was a magnificent bird in full summer plumage; and I afterwards ascertained that it was a female, with two eggs in the ovary in an advanced stage of development. This species has not yet been included among

the birds of Malta; but I heard of another example shot about the same time.

The following are some notes relating to rare and occasional visitors :—

Neophron percnopterus (Ibis, 1864, p. 44). Another example of this very rare visitor was captured here in September 1869.

Circus gallicus (Ibis, 1864, p. 45). A female specimen was obtained on the 15th of November, 1866, and was preserved for the University Museum.

Milvus niger (Ibis, 1864, p. 46). On the 20th of September, 1864, I saw a specimen of this bird in the market. It is one of the rarest birds that visit this island in migration.

Circus cyaneus (Ibis, 1864, p. 46). I have before noticed the remarkable paucity of males of this species. On the 2nd of November, 1869, I obtained in the market an adult male alive. It may be at once distinguished from *C. pallidus* (the commonest species here) by its darker colouring and the absence of grey bars on the upper tail-coverts. The presence of fine striæ on the breast is not a good distinction, as I have seen them on examples of both species. The statement of Schembri, that the males and females were equally common, evidently arose from his mistaking for it *C. pallidus*—a species omitted in his Catalogue.

Strix otus (Ibis, 1864, pp. 49, 292). Within the last two or three years I have noticed several examples in the market, both at the vernal and autumnal periods of migration. There was a live bird on the 20th of October, 1869; and I have since seen two or three others. About the same time *S. brachyotus* was unusually plentiful.

Pyrrhula githaginea (Ibis, 1864, p. 51). Several young birds were taken during the summer of 1869; and in October I detected one among a number of Finches on the stalls in the market.

Passer petronia (Ibis, 1864, p. 53). In the autumn of 1869 there appears to have been an unusually numerous migration of this bird, a good many having been taken both by the net and the gun.

Emberiza cirrus (Ibis, 1864, pp. 54, 292). Since 1863 several

examples have been taken; and on the 10th and 11th of November, 1869, I picked up two males in the market.

Emberiza nivalis (Ibis, 1864, p. 55). Returning on the 13th of November, 1869, from an unsuccessful morning's excursion, having met with nothing but such common birds as pass the winter with us, my attention was attracted by a solitary bird, of somewhat strange appearance, pecking on the ground in a moist salt bit of waste land at the inner part of the Salini. It had doubtless chosen this spot as being most sheltered from the violence of a north-easterly gale which was then blowing. On shooting it I could hardly believe my eyes at the unexpected sight of a Snow-bunting lying before me—a traveller, possibly from the icy shores of Spitsbergen! It was a male in one of its most attractive states of plumage—pure white predominating.

Sitting down beside it and gazing upon it with mixed feelings of surprise, admiration and delight, not unmixed with regret that the pursuit of our favourite study should involve the occasional destruction of such pretty creatures, it was some time before I raised it from the ground; then, carefully smoothing its finely-varied plumage and plugging the shot-holes, which, fortunately, were not extensive or numerous, I walked on with a light step, excoGITating on the strange chance that had brought me across this waif from the north.

As the Snow-Bunting seldom pushes its autumnal and winter migrations below the north of France and Germany, its presence in Malta is very extraordinary; and this island is the most southern point at which it has yet been observed*. It is not included by Dr. Salvadori in his catalogue of the birds of Sardinia; nor is any mention of it made by Benoit or Loche as a visitor in Sicily or North Africa.

Regulus cristatus (Ibis, 1864, p. 55). One of these birds flew into an open window of my house at Sliema on a cloudy day in November, 1869, and was caught. It appears to be a regular migrant in spring and autumn, and is most usually met with in the orange-groves for which the island is so famous.

Cypselus melba (Ibis, 1864, p. 58). A flock of about twenty

* [It has, however, been recorded from Tangier (Ibis, 1867, p. 427).—Ed.]

birds was seen sporting in the fortifications on the land-front of Valetta on the 11th of March, 1865.

Lanius minor (Ibis, 1864, p. 59). In September 1866, I obtained my first and only specimen of this bird. Schembri mentions it as a very rare visitor, having met with it (also in September) in 1839 and 1840. My bird had the flanks well marked with a lively pink colour, and was therefore most likely a male.

Motacilla rayi. The geographical distribution of the different species, races, or varieties of Yellow Wagtail is always a matter of interest. Hitherto I have only noticed here *M. flava*, L., and the forms *M. cinereicapilla* and *M. melanocephala*—the first and second being, perhaps, most commonly met with (Ibis, 1864, p. 63). I have now to include *M. rayi*, from an example taken in the spring of 1868 and preserved in the University Museum. Through the kindness of the Rector, I was enabled to take the specimen home for closer study and comparison with a series of the different European forms in my possession. The head and cheeks are greenish-yellow, brighter yellow on the forehead, with a superciliary streak of the same. The underparts are bright yellow, and the whole back is olivaceous-green. This Yellow Wagtail has before been observed as far south as Malta, Mr. Tristram having obtained it in Morocco and Algeria. The general result of his extended personal experience would seem to indicate that the different forms glide into one another—the dark shade of the head increasing in intensity as we go eastward.

Cyanecula suecica (Ibis, 1864, p. 67). On the 28th of March, 1869, a male of the white-spotted form of this bird (*C. leucocyanea*?) was shot in a field of *Hedysarum coronarium*. It has before been occasionally killed in Malta, but it is so extremely rare that this was the first specimen that ever came into my hands in the flesh. The blue of the breast was very brilliant, and the pectoral spot of a pure silvery-white. Several others were seen and shot about the same time.

Chætusia leucura (Ibis, 1865, p. 459). A second example of this very scarce European visitor was shot, on some marshy ground at the head of the Grand Harbour, on the 24th of October, 1869. It had no companions, and it was by mere chance

that its occurrence became known. The taxidermist I usually employ happened to be a relation of the man who shot it; and he, having seen the specimen obtained by me in 1864 and the figure of it in 'The Ibis' (1865, pl. x.), immediately recognized its value, and saved it from being cooked. When shown to me, it had already been set up; but the skin was quite fresh. Like the former specimen, it was a female: the tail was entirely white, without the terminal brown bar which is sometimes present in this species. The bird-stuffer assured me that the irides were *brown*, which agrees with the experience of Dr. Adams, who shot this bird in the Punjaub; the margins of the eyelids were *red*. There was nothing extraordinary in the weather at the time to account for its appearance.

Tringa temmincki (Ibis, 1864, p. 148). I shot another specimen of this Stint on the 14th of May, 1869, at the Salini, out of a flock of five. This makes the third or fourth time that I have observed it; but I have no doubt that it is commoner than it appears to be, and is often mistaken for its congener.

Phænicopterus roseus (Ibis, 1864, p. 149). Among the remarkable captures made in the winter of 1867-68, were two Flamingos, shot at the Salini, after having been seen at the Marsa. The weather had been very stormy for some days previously. This bird, like many others, is much more rarely seen now than formerly.

Larus minutus (Ibis, 1864, p. 152). This is a very uncertain visitor, and during the last four or five years I have not met with it more than two or three times.

Anas casarca (Ibis, 1864, p. 155). A second example was shot at the Marsa, in December 1864; and I saw a third in a collection of Maltese birds.

Mergus albellus (Ibis, 1864, pp. 156, 291). This rare visitor has appeared several times during the last few years. A fine adult male was obtained in the winter of 1868, and preserved for the University Museum; and at the same time one or two females were shot.

I find that an examination of Dr. Salvadori's interesting catalogue of the birds of Sardinia (*cf.* Ibis, 1865, p. 225), for a copy of which I am indebted to the author's kindness, confirms

to a great extent my own observations on the migration of birds in Malta. By a singular coincidence, the number of species therein included is the same as that at which my Malta list now stands; but it is, of course, made up of somewhat different elements. It is scarcely to be doubted, however, that most of those regular migrants which have occasionally been taken here, do likewise visit Sardinia more or less frequently, though they may not hitherto have been noticed there. The much greater size of that island does not give it so preponderating an advantage as would at first sight appear, over our little sea-girt rock; for while many rare and adventitious visitors may be easily overlooked in the wilds and forests of Sardinia, here, on the contrary, in this circumscribed spot they are brought, as it were, into a focus; and, as nearly everybody has a gun, and all kinds of birds, from an Eagle to a Nightingale, are sent to the market as "game," comparatively few, even of the rarest, escape notice. It is to be hoped that Dr. Salvadori's excellent catalogue will incite other close observers, like himself, to form similar catalogues for other parts of the Mediterranean. I may, however, remark that he gives, incidentally, a list of the rarities in the collection of Signor Negri, at Genoa, including a specimen of *Actiturus longicaudus* taken there in October 1859, making, with that recorded by me (*Ibis*, 1869, p. 247), the seventh* occurrence of this American species in Europe.

XXXVIII.—*Notes on some Old-World species of Passerine Birds.* H. B. TRISTRAM, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S., &c.

I HAVE lately received some very interesting series of Indian Passerine birds from my friend and zealous ornithological colleague, Mr. W. G. Brooks, C.E., which throw light on the geographical distribution of several species.

First I find that, as Mr. Blyth had previously noted (*Ibis*, 1867, p. 24), *Phyllopneuste rama* (Sykes) is apparently identical with *Sylvia caligata*, Licht., and *S. scita*, Eversm., a bird which evidently winters in India and breeds in Northern Asia; but Mr. Blyth at the same time suggested that possibly *Hypolais*

* [M. Gerbe (*Orn. Eur.* ii. p. 210) mentions an *eighth* killed in Picardy.—Ed.]